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C O N F I D E N T I A L SECTION 01 OF 03 BRUSSELS 000854

SIPDIS

E.O. 12958: DECL: 06/15/2019

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SI

SUBJECT: JUNE GAERC - GUANTANAMO, IRELAND, THE MIDDLE EAST,  
WESTERN BALKANS AND MO...

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SI

SUBJECT: JUNE GAERC - GUANTANAMO, IRELAND, THE MIDDLE EAST,

WESTERN BALKANS AND MORE

BRUSSELS 00000854 001.2 OF 003

Classified By: USEU POL M-C Christopher Davis for reasons 1.4 (b) and (d).

11. (C) Summary: Meeting in Luxembourg on June 15, EU Foreign Ministers prepared the June 18-19 European Council summit meeting on guarantees for Ireland and financial regulation, and they addressed the Middle East, Western Balkans, and Cuba. Significantly, they announced the approval of joint US-EU joint statement on Guantanamo. The EU-Israel Association Council was new Israeli Foreign Minister Lieberman's first interaction with EU Foreign Ministers since assuming his new post, but it resulted in no progress on upgrading relations. A planned dinner with the Secretary General of the Arab League was canceled over formalities, but a summit with King Abdullah of Jordan remained scheduled for the margins of the Council, as did a meeting between Enlargement Commissioner Rehn and the Foreign Ministers of both Slovenia and Croatia. End Summary.

General Affairs  
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12. (SBU) Chaired by Czech Deputy Prime Minister and Foreign Minister Jan Kohout and Czech Minister of European Affairs Stephan Fule, the General Affairs Council discussed Guantanamo closure and preparations for the upcoming European Council meeting June 18-19. The Council adopted without discussion the EU-US Joint Statement on the closure of the Guantanamo Bay detention facility and future counter-terrorism cooperation. Summing up what he described as a joint effort of the Czech presidency, the EU counter-terrorism coordinator, and the U.S., Kohout said that

joint statement was looking both to the past and to the future. Kohout stressed that Ministers had not discussed numbers of prisoners to be transferred, but about the means and conditions that give us a heading for a political agreement with the U.S.

¶3. (SBU) In addition to discussing Guantanamo, Ministers focused on preparing draft conclusions for the European Council meeting June 18-19, with guarantees for Ireland to organize another referendum on the Lisbon Treaty and financial regulation figuring prominently. Kohout reported that Irish colleagues presented a draft text of guarantees which he described as a result of consultations with the presidency and the Council's legal department. He said that very good progress had been made and that the process was on track. According to Kohout, the guarantees sought by the Irish involve social aspects, workers rights, taxation, and security and defense (septel). Suggesting that this was still a work in progress, Kohout reported that the final round of consultations among the EU27 would start on June 16.

¶4. (SBU) Kohout said that the aim of the presidency was to ensure a smooth passage of the text at the European Summit and that it not reopen the ratification process for Lisbon, nor go against the consensus reached at the December 2008 summit. Sule reported that while the EU27 should approach the issue of the Irish guarantees with creativity, the means should not create problems in the other Member States. Some Member States expressed concern that adopting a protocol as opposed to just a declaration could reopen domestic debate in their countries on ratification of the Lisbon Treaty.

¶5. (SBU) Kohout reported that the presidency received broad support for its draft of the European Council conclusions on 1) financial regulation and support for a new framework based on proposals by the Commission, 2) climate change (which will reflect the conclusions of the last Ecofin Council), 3) immigration (Kohout saying a European response based on solidarity was needed and that conclusions will touch upon cooperation with both countries of origin and transit), 4) Afghanistan-Pakistan, and 5) the Middle East.

#### External Affairs - the Middle East -----

¶6. (SBU) Chaired by Czech Deputy PM and FM Kohout, the External Affairs session focused on the Middle East, Western Balkans, and Cuba. The Council welcomed the initial step announced by Israeli Prime Minister (PM) Netanyahu of commitment to a peace that would include a Palestinian state and urged both parties to take immediate steps to resume  
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peace negotiations, respecting previous agreements and understandings. Kohout said great attention was also paid to the June 4 speech of President Obama. He said that the positions of the EU and the U.S. were remaMiddle East. of Jue 15 did not yield much progress. According 4o the Israeli Embassy, Ferrero-Waldner and others emphasized that the mood was not right Qt this point for progress on the upgrade in rqlations decided in 2008. The Action Plan (the implementation document for the Association Agreement) expired in May 2009 and was simply continued, with the EU also not wanting to move forward at this time. There was no joint statement from the Association Council meeting, and the statement issued by the EU links forward movement on the upgrade in relations to the context of the peace process. In addition, a dinner planned for June 14 between the EU Troika and the Arab League Secretary General Amr Moussa was canceled in a disagreement over formalities, but then Spanish Foreign Minister Moratinos hosted a personal invitation dinner June 15 which included some Arab states (reportedly Algeria, the UAE, Palestinian Authority, and the Arab League's Amr Moussa) and a handful of Europeans.

¶9. (SBU) On Iran, the Council noted concerns regarding the conduct of the Iranian presidential elections and expressed serious concern about the violence on the streets and the use of force against peaceful demonstrators. HR Solana said that the elections had been followed with attention. While noting the high level of voter turnout, he said that the EU was now concerned by events unfolding in Tehran and added we want a solid relationship with Iran - we have a lot to do together.

## External Affairs - Western Balkans

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¶10. (SBU) The GAERC Conclusions called for the countries of the region to further accelerate and implement reforms necessary to fulfill the necessary accession-related benchmarks. During the working lunch, Ministers had an exchange of views with ICTY Chief Prosecutor Brammertz, following his report to the UNSC on cooperation by Serbia and other countries with the ICTY. Commissioner Rehn reported that the Council brought the Commission some good news on the Western Balkans and welcomed the Council's invitation to the Commission to present a proposal for a legislative framework for visa free travel for those countries that will have met the benchmarks. Rehn reported that the Commission BRUSSELS 00000854 003.2 OF 003 will present this proposal before the summer break.

¶11. (SBU) Regarding the ongoing border dispute between Slovenia and Croatia which hampers Croatia's EU accession negotiations, Rehn reported that he had met with the presidency trio and then with the Slovene and Croatian FMs, adding we will continue the discussions to find a solution. He said that the presidency trio endorses the process and that the two FMs will now consult further with their respective governments. Later, Rehn confessed that productivity could be higher, but we're doing indepth work with colleagues.

¶12. (SBU) Asked to comment about a lack of achievement on Enlargement during the Czech presidency, FM Kohout said that the questioner was right, but due to circumstances results could not materialize so far - we still have two weeks time and I'm still optimistic. Asked whether Serbia would be debated again at the European Council, Kohout said that today's discussion had been in an informal setting (over lunch) and that my feeling is that we are closer to understanding what we can do - I can't exclude that the European Council will address the issue. Responding to a question about people-to-people contacts with Kosovo, Commissioner Rehn said that the issue would be addressed in a feasibility study to be presented by the Commission in October and confirmed that the Commission wanted to work for the Europeanization of Kosovo.

¶13. (C) A friendly country contact told us that the discussion on Serbia was the most contentious of the GAERC, wherein Dutch FM Verhagen dug himself a complete hole.<sup>8</sup> Swedish FM Bildt and UK FM Miliband reportedly got very cross<sup>8</sup> with the Dutch FM blocking the interim agreement until Mladic and Hadzic are turned over to the ICTY. Belgrade is doing better and needs forward movement with the EU, our contact contended, and he attributed Verhagen's obduracy not only to the legacy of Srebrenica, but to his wanting to be seen as tough in the context of Dutch parliamentary politics.

## External Affairs - Cuba and Other Countries

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¶14. (SBU) In the context of the annual review of the EU Common Position, the Council welcomed the resumption of the political dialogue with Cuba. Further, the Council said that the political dialogue should be pursued and deepened on a comprehensive, equal and result-oriented basis. The Council also agreed to review its Common Position on Cuba again in June 2010. FM Kohout reported that meetings with the Cuban opposition would go ahead at all opportunities. Asked about reaction to a letter reportedly sent to the Czechs by Cuban groups calling for a tougher approach on the part of the EU, Kohout said that the Czech Republic would return to be a normal member state as of July 1st and will then be defining a position. He noted that contacts with the Cuban opposition are a constant of European policy and added the contacts we had gave us the feeling that these contacts make sense.

¶15. (SBU) On Burma, the Council reviewed EU policy on Burma in the light of developments in the country, in particular political prisoners, ethnic minorities, respect for human rights, and progress toward the establishment of an inclusive

democratization process in the run-up to planned elections. The debate focused on the ongoing trial of Aung San Suu Kyi, the Council agreeing to issue a statement on the occasion of her anniversary of imprisonment on June 19 (which coincides with the European Council meeting).

¶16. (SBU) Concerning Moldova, the Council adopted negotiating guidelines for a new government with Moldova which are aimed at taking relations beyond the current partnership and association agreement.

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